

Ted's Teaching Tip of the Week for WTOonline Faculty

GOAL: Simulate "real" user tracking.

PREMISE: Angel has User Tracking. It's a dropdown box when you click the "Access" tab of a page or folder. As far as I have been able to determine, however, it's only "User Noticing." When the student goes into a lesson page, Angel reports the exact time the person accessed that page. And that's only if you physically set "User Tracking" to "Everyone" instead of allowing the default "Disabled" to thwart your attempts to retrieve information. It doesn't tell you anything about how long the person was in the lesson.

Do you remember the good old days when we had "Course Tracking" on WTOonline? You could get a report on each student and you could know where s/he went and when.

unit08 (Unit Name: Chapter 8)		
activities.htm	3	Mar 29, 2007 @ 2:39:51 pm
comments.htm	2	Mar 29, 2007 @ 2:39:50 pm
index.htm	6	Apr 2, 2007 @ 3:12:50 pm
matching2.htm	0	
notation.htm	1	Mar 29, 2007 @ 2:08:10 pm
textbook.htm	3	Mar 29, 2007 @ 2:30:06 pm
wrapup.htm	2	Apr 2, 2007 @ 3:12:54 pm
chap8		
chap8.htm	0	
unit09 (Unit Name: Chapter 9)		
activities.htm	4	Apr 4, 2007 @ 9:05:08 pm
chap6matching.htm	0	
comments.htm	1	Apr 2, 2007 @ 3:18:05 pm
index.htm	4	Apr 4, 2007 @ 9:09:43 pm
matching3.htm	0	
wrapup.htm	3	Apr 4, 2007 @ 9:09:47 pm

You can see that the student above was in the unit08 notation.htm for 22 minutes, textbook.htm for 9 minutes, and comments.htm for 1 second. It's not a perfect system because going into a page a second time covers up the first entry, but it's better than nothing. The good news is that you can almost relive the past with this edition of teaching tips. You can imitate the old "Course Tracking," but you have to do it in a different way.

PROCEDURE: Set up two pages for each lesson and ask questions where you provide the answer in the second page. (You will have to write some HTML links [see my link .pdf], but I'll show you here as well.) If you put a question at the beginning and at the end of your lesson, you'll know approximately how long the student was in the lesson. I've tried having the student send me an e-mail when s/he finishes, but a lot of times the e-mail comes the next day! (I don't know why a high-speed internet connection can allow a student through a 50-minute lecture in the face-to-face course in 28 seconds yet take overnight for an e-mail.)

In the following example I want the student to go into "lesson33." I'll ask a question early on and have him/her check to see if we're thinking alike. When the student is finished, s/he clicks the "Return" link to go back to where s/he was before being so rudely interrupted. NOTE: You don't need to have the student go to the second page early on except to know that s/he is working down the opening page the way you've designed the lesson, because you already have the opening page time. Notice also that I scramble the answers to defeat a student just

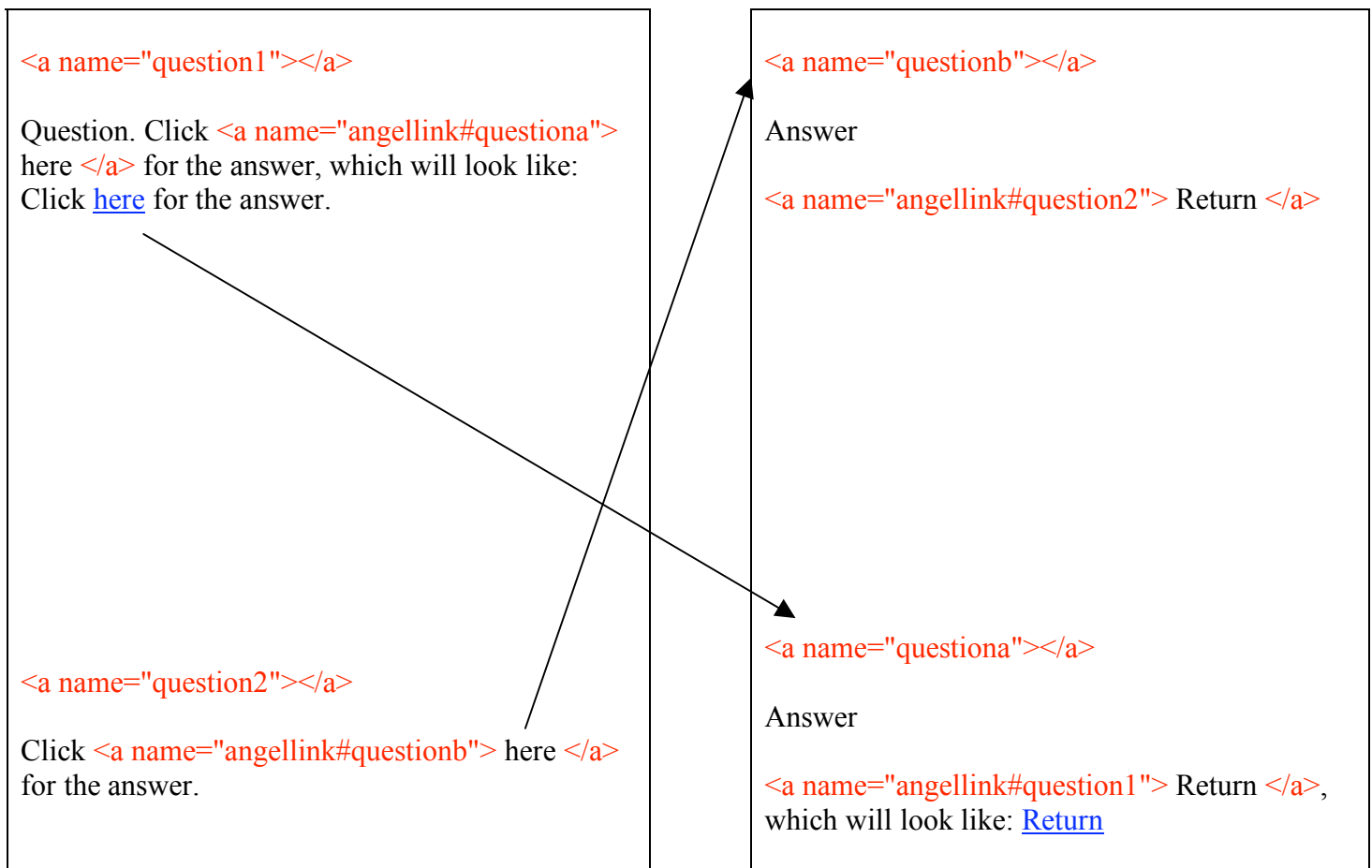
printing both pages and being done with it. Also if you put a lot of space between questions so that only this answer is visible it might discourage a student printing 20 pages for two answers.

Here's how I would set this up. I have two pages: "lesson33" and "answerman33".

1. I've shown you the anchors (``) to return to a specific place going from one page to the another. I put the anchors in red. You can only see them when you click the "View Source" box and you'll have to enter them yourself. I've used "angellink," but Angel's link is much longer than that.
2. To make a word "clickable," you have to put the tag ending (``) the right side of the word.
3. To make the link to the next page, I go into HTML Editor, highlight the link word (for my example "here" or "Return"), click on the book icon, and find and click on the target page. Next, click in the URL address at the bottom of the HTML Editor page's Link Inspector and use the arrow keys to go to the end of that text string. Type a pound sign and the anchor name, then accept the changes. For the first one, it would be `#questiona`.

lesson33

answerman33



Like the spider, you must wait before you can see if there are any flies. When you are ready to check activity, you'll need to run the report for "lesson33" and "answerman33."

SUMMARY

1. Obviously, this method is not practical for courses that have large enrollments, but a course with fewer than 25 students is manageable. In large classes, use "Activity Summary." If it shows a "1," that student only went into the main page. It's from "Activity Detail" that you can do the detective work for overall time.
2. What I've discovered is that students are sending me a lot of e-mails saying they've completed the lesson. I can see that they went into the lesson, but I'm learning that they could not have learned everything they could have learned. And it's not my fault for not trying!